

Distance Learning Decision Package – DP 1052

Accountability Measures

During the interim, the Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Subcommittee (PEPB), in the process of recommending executive consideration of funding for \$900,000 funding for improvements to the distance learning system, recommended that accountability measures be applied to this appropriation.¹

Given the ongoing nature of the distance learning program and its application across the university system, the legislature may want to consider adding an accountability measure should the following decision package in the executive budget for the 2009 biennium be approved:

In Executive Budget...Apply Accountability Measures to:

- DP 1052 – Coordinate and Expand Distance Learning (OTO) - The executive restores and increases the one-time-only funding to support coordinating and expansion of the distance learning/online educational programs for the university system. This one-time-only proposal is for \$900,000 and 1.00 FTE for the 2009 biennium with funding allocated as follows:
 - Central course management and expand the “gateway” for all courses: \$450,000
 - Develop new on-line courses in high-demand areas: \$100,000
 - Develop on-line application, records, and financial aid processes: \$75,000
 - Develop learning outcomes assessment: \$25,000
 - Develop on-line student support and advising system: \$100,000
 - Create single tuition and fee statements for on-line courses: \$75,000
 - Administrative costs: \$75,000

Proposed Accountability Measure (in a companion bill to HB2):

The university system is encouraged to expand and coordinate the distance learning program across the university system. The university system is urged to:

- Increase by ____% the number of students enrolled in distance learning education courses
- Increase by ____% the number of distance learning courses and programs that are offered
- Increase by ____% the number of new credit and non-credit distance education programs that are intended to serve primarily workers in need of career training and employers in need of specially skilled workers

By August 2008, the office of the commissioner of higher education shall report to the education and local government interim committee success in achieving the measures contained above. If the measures contained above are achieved, then the education and local government interim committee shall recommend to the office of budget and program planning that the appropriation of \$ ____, contained in House Bill No. 2 at line ____ of the 60th legislature may be treated as present law base and be part of the base budget for the 61st legislature.

*** Decision package detail indicates that \$75,000 is ongoing administrative costs

¹ Initiative DP #4: Coordinate and Improve Distance Learning (restricted, OTO)

The PEPB recommends a restricted general fund appropriation of \$900,000 to support the expansion and coordination of the distance learning program across the university system as follows:

- \$450,000 in FY 2008 to support this program and to continue work on the “Montana Distance Learning Gateway”

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- \$450,000 in FY 2009 to continue program support, contingent upon the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education providing a report that is presented to PEPB by May 15, 2008 that demonstrates the following:
 - an increase of ____% of students enrolled in distance learning education courses
 - an increase of ____% in the number of distance learning courses and programs that are offered
 - an increase of ____% in the number of new credit and non-credit distance education programs that are intended to serve primarily workers in need of career training and employers in need of specially skilled workers

Approved by PEPB at meeting on Monday, June 12, 2006

Distance Learning Accountability Measures (DP 1052)

The Board of Regents adopted the following goal related to distance and on-line learning:

Goal I (6): Improve distance and on-line learning by coordinating online delivery of education across the entire Montana University System.

The MUS will coordinate and expand distance learning opportunities across the university system. By August of 2008, the MUS would expect to achieve the following measurable results:

1. Increase by 5% the number of students enrolled in distance learning education courses.
2. Add 10 new distance learning courses and/or programs.
3. Add 10 new credit and non-credit distance education programs that are intended to serve workers in need of career training and employers in need of training for skilled workers.

By August 2008, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education shall report to the Education interim committee on the success in achieving the measures above. If the above measures are achieved, then the Education interim committee shall recommend to the Office of Budget and Program Planning that a biennial appropriation of \$450,000 be treated as present law base and be part of the base budget for the 61st Legislature.